

CAROLYN B. MALONEY  
14TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

2331 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-3214  
(202) 225-7944

COMMITTEES:  
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SUITE 311  
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☐ 28-11 ASTORIA BOULEVARD  
ASTORIA, NY 11102  
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WEBSITE: [www.house.gov/maloney](http://www.house.gov/maloney)

October 7, 2004

The Honorable Thomas Ridge  
Secretary  
United States Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Ridge,

I am writing to support the concerns of Citizens for a Safe East Fiftieth Street, who have written to you about the Metropolitan Transportation Agency's (MTA) plans to construct a utility building on East 50<sup>th</sup> Street between Madison and Park Avenues in Manhattan in connection with the East Side Access project (copy enclosed). While I strongly support East Side Access, which will be a boon to tens of thousands of commuters from Long Island and Queens, and a great benefit to local businesses, I am concerned that the MTA's design for this particular facility could pose a homeland security threat to thousands of workers and pedestrians.

The MTA proposes to build a sixteen story utility building -- including back-up fuel tanks and generators, ventilation discharge and intake vents, cooling towers and loading docks -- in the heart of midtown Manhattan, directly across from the Palace Hotel, around the corner from St. Patrick's Cathedral and between two large commercial office buildings. The emergency fuel tanks to be housed in the building could make it vulnerable to a terrorist attack. Concerned neighbors point out that terrorists could target the building knowing that the resulting conflagration would likely destroy the surrounding buildings and spread to the underground passenger concourse below. As you know, fuel tanks located in Seven World Trade Center likely contributed to that building's collapse on 9/11.

Additionally, the placement of the discharge vents from the passenger concourse raises a concern for the neighboring buildings. Security experts often point to the possibility of a terrorist releasing biological, chemical or radiological agents into the city's subway system. If terrorists were to target the proposed passenger concourse, the building's ventilation system would discharge those poisons onto East 50<sup>th</sup> Street. Further, Citizens for a Safe East Fiftieth Street raise concerns that the system would discharge stale air at the place where the two adjacent buildings take in air, rendering the workers in those buildings particularly vulnerable to any toxins released into the subway system.

Please review the concerns presented by the Citizens for a Safe East Fiftieth Street and advise me as to your conclusions, consistent with all applicable rules and regulations. Thank you for your attention to these concerns.

Very truly yours,

*Carolyn B. Maloney*  
CAROLYN B. MALONEY  
Member of Congress

CBM/mre

Please reply to: 1651 Third Avenue, Suite 311, New York, NY 10128

cc: Citizens for a Safe East Fiftieth Street

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